

his work to make quality health care accessible for all Montana veterans.

Rick proudly served our country as a marine from January 1971 to January 1975. Unfortunately, his current illness requires constant care and attention. His wife, Sharon, long served as his primary round-the-clock caretaker and was confined to their home due to Rick's condition, which required an external ventilator to breathe at all times. Eventually his needs surpassed his ability to stay home, and he had to move into a long-term care facility.

While Rick was still at home, the Rosebud Health Care Center, RHCC, facility initiated a contract with the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, to be able to provide care and services to veterans in its long-term care unit. The previous aging and resource center for Rosebud County was in Glendive, MT, about 1 hour and 40 minutes away from Rick's home in Forsyth, MT. Thankfully, RHCC received approval from the VA to provide care services close to home for Rick on November 1, 2015.

Rick's persistence and advocacy throughout his illness helped serve as the catalyst for RHCC establishing a contract with the VA that allows for veterans to receive long-term care in Forsyth. Our State has one of the largest populations of veterans per capita, and Rick's efforts have led the VA to create additional resources to help to provide health care services to Montana's extensive veteran population.

I am so proud to have advocates like Rick and Sharon fighting for veterans in Montana. Through his inspiring work to increase veterans' access to care, Rick Young has created an unmatched legacy that will leave a lasting mark on our State. Keep fighting, Rick. I am rooting for you.●

TRIBUTE TO MAYOR JOE RILEY

● Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I wish to speak today about Mayor Joe Riley, who is retiring after decades of service to the people of Charleston, SC.

Simply put, Joe Riley is one of the best mayors in America and a living legend in South Carolina political history. He is a hard-working, dedicated public servant who has spent most of his adult life serving the people of Charleston. I have never known anyone who loves their job more than he.

Years ago, Mayor Riley came into office with a vision for Charleston, but like all great leaders, he understood he couldn't do it alone. He went to work doing what he does best—bringing people together for the common good.

Now, as he retires from serving as mayor of the city he loves, the revitalization of this historic city is absolutely stunning. Thanks to his years of service, Charleston is now recognized as one of the best destinations to visit, not only in the United States but in the world.

Joe Riley will go down in history as a transformative mayor who turned his

vision for Charleston into reality. We are all better because of his service.●

TRIBUTE TO PAUL KOESTER

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Paul Koester on his retirement after over 41 years of service to the U.S. Air Force. It gives me great pleasure to recognize his years of dedication to protecting our country and our State.

Mr. Koester grew up in Colorado Springs, CO, and later enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1974 with the intention of serving 4 years as a jet engine mechanic. During his time in basic training, he decided to change course and test to become a pararescue airman. After successfully passing his training, he spent the next 4 years at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska as part of the 71st Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron. During his time serving in this squadron, he was credited with saving over 75 lives.

From 1980 to 1986, Mr. Koester served at McClellan Air Force Base in California and Little Rock Air Force Base in Arkansas. He soon after decided to join the Air National Guard. For the next 16 years, Mr. Koester served in the 102nd Rescue Squadron at Francis S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base in New York. On September 11, 2001, Mr. Koester and his squadron assisted as first responders during the collapse of the World Trade Center, aiding in saving the lives of many victims of the attack. His bravery and selflessness during this time of crisis will never be forgotten.

Three weeks later, Mr. Koester was deployed to the border of Kuwait and Iraq to serve as part of Operation Southern Watch. Following his return from this mission, Mr. Koester made the decision to resume Active Duty and was sent to Nellis Air Force Base in 2003 as part of the 58th Rescue Squadron. He concluded his service with this unit after 12 years of service. At his 60th birthday celebration, Mr. Koester was recognized as the oldest enlisted member actively serving in the Air Force and the longest serving pararescue airman with 13 deployments throughout his career. Our country and the Silver State are fortunate to have had someone of such dedication serving to protect our freedoms.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have had no greater honor than the opportunity to engage with the men and women who served in our Nation's military. I recognize Congress has a responsibility not only to honor the brave individuals who serve our Nation, but also to ensure they are cared for when they return home. I remain committed to upholding this promise for veterans like Mr. Koester in Nevada and throughout the Nation.

Mr. Koester has demonstrated professionalism, commitment to excellence, and dedication to the highest standards of the U.S. Air Force. I am proud to

call him a fellow Nevadan, and I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing Mr. Koester for his years of service and in congratulating him on his retirement. I wish him well in all of his future endeavors.●

CONGRATULATING BILL LANDON

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Bill Landon on receiving the 2015 Air and Surface Transport Nurses Association Lynn Stevens Excellence in Safety Award. It gives me great pleasure to see him receive this prestigious award after years of hard work within northern Nevada.

In 1998, Mr. Landon began his air ambulance career in Greeley, CO. In 2003, he joined Care Flight in Reno and has since served as safety and training coordinator and flight paramedic. During his time at Care Flight, he has been a key contributor in the founding of a formalized safety committee, which meets twice a month and is comprised of medical flight staff pilots, air communication specialists, managers, and maintenance personnel. This important committee, chaired by Mr. Landon, works to review, develop, and implement safety initiatives for Care Flight and those that it serves. As chair, Mr. Landon spearheads important safety trainings, including an annual training for hospital emergency departments, pre-hospital agencies, and ski patrols servicing a 40,000 square mile area. His unwavering dedication to Care Flight in Reno has helped provide hundreds of hours of safety and medical training needed to save lives throughout northern Nevada. His work for our State is invaluable.

The Lynn Steven's Excellence in Safety Award goes to individuals who have gone above and beyond in the transportation community to promote safety awareness. This accolade is truly prestigious and attained by only the most influential members in this community. Since 1981, Care Flight has served northern Nevada's health organizations as an important resource for transportation with flight paramedics and pilots to respond to a variety of medical emergencies. Our State is fortunate to have someone like Mr. Landon serving Care Flight and its safety initiatives.

Throughout his tenure, Mr. Landon has demonstrated professionalism, commitment to excellence, and dedication to his trade. I am honored by his service and am proud to call him a fellow Nevadan. Today, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Landon on receiving this award, and I extend my deepest appreciation for all that he has done for many across northern Nevada. I offer him my best wishes in his role as safety and training coordinator in the future.●

TRIBUTE TO KRISTI BLACKLER

● Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, today I recognize Kristi Blackler, an